THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE EMIRATE OF AYDIN IN THE FIRST THIRD OF THE XIV CENTURY

Annotation: The processes of emergence and development of the Emirate of Aydin in the first third of the XIV century is revealed by the author in this article. The author considers political and economic development of the Emirate of Aydin in the context of its international relations with European Eastern Mediterranean states.

Key words: Westernanatolian beyliks, the Emirate of Aydin, Mehmed Aydinoglu, Umur-bey Aydinoglu, the Crusades.

In the last quarter of XIII century a number of independent beyliks stood out from the Beylik of Germiyan. Among them Beyliks of Menteshe, Sarukhan, Aydin and Karasi deserve a special attention. They commonly called Western Asia Minor beyliks due to their geographical location [1, p. 93]. By the beginning of the XIV century Western Asia Minor beyliks had been a serious threat to the European countries of the Eastern Mediterranean, the most powerful of which was the Beylik of Menteshe. However, since the third decade of the XIV century the Emirate of Aydin gradually stretched military and political power [2, p. 27].

The relevance of this topic is caused by the erroneous opinion in the world historiography regarding the development of Western Asia Minor beyliks during the period from the collapse of the Rum Sultanate in the beginning of the XIV century until the elevation of the Ottoman beylik in the middle of the XIV century. In this research work we proceed from the assumption, that the first third of the XIV century was a period of political, military and economic flourish of Western Asia Minor beyliks, and the Emirate of Aydin is the best example of it.

There is a lack of information about the initial development of the Emirate of Aydin. At the beginning of 1304, an important stronghold of Smyrna was captured by the Germiyanic subashi (military leader) Mehmed Aydinoglu [3, p. 26]. Byzantine emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282 – 1328) resorted to the help of mercenary troops of Roger de Flore, german by origin, who just had left service with the King of Sicily Frederick II [4, p. 301]. During the so-called “Catalan campaign” de Flore inflicted a series of defeats on the Turkish beys, and pushed them out of the valley of the Meander river. In particular, Aydin troops was defeated in the battles of Ephesus (Altoluogo, Ayasuluk) and Ani (Aney)
However, soon after the departure of the Catalans from Asia Minor, the Byzantine territories were again seized by the Turks. In October 1304, under the onslaught of Sasa-bey, the son-in-law of Karman Mentsheoglu, fell Priene and Kaistr. Then, together with Mehmed Aydinoglu, Sasa-bey captured Ephesus (Altoluogo, Ayasuluk) on October 24. Soon Keles fortress fell under the blows of the troops of Mehmed Aydinoglu [6, p. 47 – 48].

However, after the seizure of Ephesus, the struggle for power between Sasa-bey and Mehmed Aydinoglu continued throughout 1304 – 1307 [7, p. 23]. Sasa-bey appealed for help to the Phocaea Genoese. According to their peace agreement Turks returned to the Genoese Christian relics captured in Ephesus: a fragment of the cross on which, according to tradition, Jesus Christ was crucified; a shirt sewn by the Virgin Mary for St. John; Apocalypse, written by St. John [8, p. 418 – 419]. Perhaps, Catalans was also on the side of Sasa-bey, because of the willing to return the treasury of Roger de Flore. So did Byzantines, in their trying to regain Ephesus [6, p. 47 – 48]. However, in 1307 Sasa-bey was defeated by Mehmed Aydinoglu. Soon after Aydin troops captured Pirgion (Birgi) [9, p. 39]. Thus, the Emirate of Aydin was finally formed, and after the collapse of the Rum Sultanate in 1307, Mehmed Aydinoglu assumed the title of Emir [2, p. 26].

After receiving the access to the Aegean Sea by Western Asia Minor beyliks, their trade relations with the European states of the Eastern Mediterranean have expanded [2, p. 78]. The largest centers of commerce in the Western Asia Minor beyliks were Aydin towns Ayasuluk (Altoluogo, Ephesus) and Balat (Palatya, Milet), Izmir (Smyrna) harbor and Prepiya (Epretiya) [10, p. 1]. Ayasuluk harbor was distinguished by good security from the winds and considerable depth (6 – 8 sea fathoms) [11, p. 149 – 150]. Here was one of the residences of the Aydin emirs. The city was situated at some distance from the sea. That’s why merchants were in need to incur additional costs associated with transporting of goods. Therefore, it was a high rent for storage space – half of the florin per month [12, p. 40]. Alum, wheat, barley, legumes, rice, wax and honey, large dark raisins, hemp, sesame seed, saffron, ink nuts, cheese, hides, treated salt skin, red morocco, flax, carpets with shaggy hair, blankets, felt were exported from Ayasuluk and Balat [13, p. 140]. “Turkish velvet” was exported through Phocaea, and cotton was transported through Balat [14, p. 613]. Slaves, cattle (oxen, donkeys, horses), wax were an important export items [15, p. 186, 230]. A special place among exported goods was occupied by alum mined in mines near Kutahya, the capital of the Germiyan beylik. But the sale of alum was carried out on the Ayasuluk and Balat markets [2, p. 80].

Probably, there wasn’t weaving in emirate, that’s why cloths were one of the important import items. Narbon, Perpignan, Toulouse cloth (sky-colored, turquoise, scarlet, pistachio, emerald green), camlot, half-woolen fabrics, Florence wool cloth, Irish twill were in great demand [14, p. 737]. Big profits for merchants brought soap (Venetian, Anconian, Apulian) trading [15, p. 173]. Bars of silver, tin, lead, refined copper in bars, wine were also provided into the Western Asia Minor beyliks [12, p. 41 – 42].
Italian merchants were very interested in expanding economic relations with the Emirate of Aydin. In this regard, they established a settlement not far from the port of Ayasuluk, near the river Meandr, which connected coastal beyliks with inner regions of Asia Minor. This settlement was a place, where all the necessary goods were delivered before bringing to Europe [16, p. 25]. Italian merchants made trade operations not only near the coast. Many Genoese and Venetians lived in Philadelphia. Their caravans reached Sivas, the center of intersection of the most important trade routes on the peninsula [2, p. 81].

However, Europeans were primarily interested in trade relations, then Turks. In the beginning of the XIV century Menteshe and Aydin beys began to patronize the development of the navy. Military fleet gave them an opportunity for military expeditions to the possessions of their opponents [17, p. 363]. From 1305 Byzantine lands in Thrace and Macedonia had been suffered from sea raids of the Turks. These raids weren’t an aggressive one: the Turks had plundered coastal areas and then returned to Asia Minor with trophies [18, p. 283].

The beginning of the 1320’s was the period of a prompt rise of the Emirate of Aydin. After establishment of the Duchy of Athens, the catalans restored friendly relations with the turks, in particular, Aydin bey [19, p. 34]. On June 21, 1318, the Catalan-Aydin fleet headed against Venetian Crete and the nearby islands of Santorini and Karpathos. In June 1318, it was reported to the Venetians, that the Aydin and the Catalans were preparing a joint military action against Negroponte. The Turkish fleet comprised 24 ships and 2 Catalan galleys of don Alfonso Fadrique [20, p. 110]. The Venetians entered into negotiations with the Catalans, which resulted in an armistice between them in June 1319. According to the agreement, don Alfonso had to abandon joint actions with the Turks. Nevertheless, friendly relations between the Turks and the Catalans persisted until 1329 [2, p. 30].

By 1319, the Aydin fleet had numbered 10 galleys, 19 sixty and eight-vessel ships with a crew of 2,600 warriors [21, p. 9]. However, this navy was almost completely destroyed by the united army of Knights of St. John and the Genoese under the command of the ruler of Chios Martino Zaccaria on July 23, 1319. Only 400 Turks were able to escape on six ships. Soon, Zaccaria began to organize military expeditions to the peninsula of Asia Minor with the aim of robbery. As a result, the Emirate of Aydin began to pay tribute to him. During these expeditions, more than 10 thousand Aydin soldiers were killed and captured [22, p. 159].

It took 3 years to restore the navy power. In 1322, together with the bey of Germiyan Yakub I, Mehmed-bey took part in the siege of Philadelphia – the Greek city at the junction of three beyliks: Germiyan, Aydin and Sarukhan. In 1324, after a nearly two-year siege (1 year, 7 months), an armistice was concluded between the Turks and Alexios Philanthropenos, under the terms of which the Philadelphia continued to pay tribute to the bey of Germiyan. From 1335 city also paid a tribute to Umur-bey Aydinoglu (son of Mehmed Aydinoglu) [2, p. 28]. Despite this, Philadelphia remained under the control of Byzantium until 1390 [23, p. 808].
During the Venetian-Catalan war (February 1326), Alfonso Fadrique, on his ships, sent Turkish troops to Negropont [24, p. 149]. They have been defeated by the Venetians and retreated to the Catalan fortress Karystos, and then firstly to Athens and then to Asia Minor [20, p. 205]. To avoid punishment from the Pope, in 1327 the attacks of the Aydin fleet on the possessions of Alfonso Fadrique on Negroponte and on Aegina were simulated [25, p. 831]. In 1328 the Aydin army again landed on the coast of Negroponte. In 1329, Aydin troops attacked Athens, what helped to sign a preliminary peace agreement between Venice and the Duchy of Athens [2, p. 30]. Peace agreement was ratified at Thebes on April 5, 1331. According to its terms, the Catalans were forbidden to render assistance to the Turkish troops and to accept their troops for service [20, p. 216].

During the second half of the 1320’s Aydin troops constantly campaigned on the city of Smyrna, which for a long time was successfully defended by Martino Zaccaria. However, in the summer of 1329, due to the threat of attack by the Byzantines on Chios, Zaccaria was forced to surrender the city to Umurbey [6, p. 51]. Nevertheless, Chios was captured by Byzantine. After this the emperor Andronicus III (1328 – 1341) went to the Byzantium Old Phocaea [22, p. 159]. During his stay in Old Phocaea alliance with the beyliks of Sarukhan and Menteshe was established [26, p. 143]. Mehmed-bey could not personally come to the emperor due to illness, but sent his embassy to him with a purpose to join the alliance [27, p. 24].

Thus, throughout 1328 – 1329 the alliance of Byzantium with the beyliks of Karasi, Menteshe, Sarukhan, and the Emirate of Aydin was formed. By this alliance Byzantium sought to weaken the political and economic influence of the Latin republics in the Eastern Mediterranean. Moreover, Andronicus have got protection from possible military clashes with Western Asia Minor beyliks, as well as the isolation of the Ottoman beylik in Asia Minor [23, p. 808]. In turn, the Western Asia Minor beyliks were also interested in a strong ally, because their long-standing alliance with the Duchy of Athens had collapsed by that time [2, p. 29].

There were 60 cities and 300 fortresses 1330’s under the rule of Mehmed Aydinoglu by the early 1330’s. The emir of Aydin had an army of 70 thousand horsemen [2, p. 31]. Especially difficult was the situation of Venetian Crete, whose island possessions were constantly suffering from the raids of the Aydin fleet. Only in 1331 more than 25 thousand Christians were captured [28, p. 797]. The position of Negropont became more and more threatening. In March 1332, Duca Naxos Niccolo Sanudo agreed to conclude a separate agreement with the Aydin. In May 1332, 40 thousand Aydin soldiers on 390 ships devastated the archipelago and captured 10 thousand Greeks [29, p. 1123]. In June 1332, the situation worsened so much that the Senate discussed the issue of the possible conclusion of a treaty between the Venetian Baylo on Negroponte and Umurbey [24, p. 213 – 214]. At the same time, baylo Pietro Zeno was forced to pay a tribute to Umur-bey [6, p. 70 – 71].
In this situation, on September 6, 1332 the Republic of Venice initiated the creation of the Holy League to fight the Western Asia Minor beyliks [30, p. 179]. Originally it included the Republic of Venice, Republic of St. John. Subsequently Byzantine Empire joined the League [31, p. 111]. League members pledged to put the total fleet under the command of the Venetian captain Golf Pietro da Canali in the amount of 6 (Republic of Venice), 4 (Republic of St. John) and 10 (Byzantine Empire) galleys [32, p. 62]. Cypriot King Hugo IV (1324 –1358), King of France Philip VI Valois (1328 – 1350), and Avignon Pope John XXII (1316 – 1334) joined the league in March 1334 [33, p. 382]. It was agreed that the forces of the League should clear the entire Aegean Sea of Turkish warships in May 1334. After this the main attack on emirate of Aydin would be dealt in 1335 [31, p. 111]. It’s noteworthy that the Pope demanded the Duchy of Athens cease all cooperation with the Western Asia Minor beyliks, as well as stop piracy in the Aegean Sea [19, p. 38].

In response to Byzantium’s entry into the Holy League in 1334, Umur-bey Aydinoglu and his brother Hizir (reigners of Ayasuluk) raided Chios. Together with Timur Khan (son of the bey of Sarukhan) Umur-bey sent his ships to the shores of Thrace in August 1334. They landed in Poru harbor, but was defeated by Byzantine troops, led by the emperor Andronicus III. Soon after the Turks entered into negotiations with the Byzantines [340, p. 45]. Thus, the second half of the 1330’s was marked by a qualitatively new stage in the confrontation of the European states of the Eastern Mediterranean with the Western Asia Minor beyliks, which made its own adjustments to the military-economic development of the Emirate of Aydin in the subsequent period.

First third of the 14th century became the period of the emergence and development of the Western Asia Minor Emirate of Aydin. Despite the fact, that it was established only in 1307, by the beginning of the 1330’s the emirate had become a serious political and economic power in Eastern Mediterranean. By this time 60 cities and 300 fortresses were under the rule of the emir of Aydin. His army numbered about 70 thousand horsemen. The largest centers of commerce in the Western Asia Minor beyliks were Aydin towns Ayasuluk (Altoluogo, Ephesus) and Balat (Palatya, Milet), Izmir (Smyrna) harbor and Prepiya (Epretiya). However, emirates of Aydin preferred navy raids and piracy to the trade relations with Europeans.

Military-political alliances with the Duchy of Athens and the Byzantine Empire contributed to increasing of Aydin influence in the region. However, European states of the Eastern Mediterranean weren’t satisfied with the constant raids of the Western Asia Minor Beyliks of Aydin, Sarukhan and Karasi. Therefore, the Holy League was established in 1333. It included the Republic of Venice, Republic of St. John, Byzantine, The Kingdom of Cyprus, The Kingdom of France and Avignon Pope John XXII (1316 – 1334) at the head of it. Thus, the second half of the 1330’s was marked by a qualitatively new stage in the confrontation of the European states of the Eastern Mediterranean with the Western Asia Minor beyliks, which made its own adjustments to the
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References


References (transliterated)